

2003 Aquatic Reserve Technical Advisory Committee Recommendation

Fidalgo Bay

The Technical Advisory Committee (Committee) unanimously recommended managing this site as an Environmental Aquatic Reserve. All members of the Committee recommended maintaining the existing boundaries for the site.

Environmental attributes noted by the Committee during their recommendation are:

- The use by herring that spawn in the bay;
- The use of the area as a larval rearing area;
- The use of the area by migrating marine birds;
- Productive mudflat habitat; and
- Extensive eelgrass flats.

The committee felt that this area represents an important component of the regional ecosystem and that it will complement protective measures being undertaken in Padilla Bay. It was noted that while somewhat similar to Padilla Bay, this site supports a herring spawning stock. Additionally, Fidalgo Bay provides considerable restoration opportunities including potential modifications to a railroad trestle and shoreline hardening associated with roadways. It was viewed as advantageous that most of the ownership on the eastern shoreline is concentrated in a small number of owners.

The committee recognized that the northern extent of the site boundaries captured two important elements of the reserve: portions of the documented Pacific herring spawning area and habitat immediately offshore of Crandall Spit.